

February 2016

# South San Francisco Bay Shoreline Study

Alviso Ponds & Santa Clara County Feasibility Study



US Army Corps  
of Engineers.





# A shoreline at risk

The San Francisco Bay includes more than 1,000 miles of shoreline, all vulnerable to a range of natural hazards, including storms, extreme high tides and rising sea levels resulting from global climate change. An area of most concern is along the South Bay shoreline, which despite several years of record dry conditions in the region, remains a flood risk.

In 2013, the California Department of Water Resources and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers identified Santa Clara County as having one of the highest potential risks to damages from tidal flooding in the state.

Portions of the county nearest the bay are below sea level. This region includes many high-tech companies, businesses, residents and the largest water pollution control plant in the Bay Area, which serves more than 1 million people.





# History of the Shoreline Study

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Santa Clara Valley Water District and the State Coastal Conservancy have been exploring options in Santa Clara County since 2005 to manage flood risk along the shoreline, as well as restoring ecosystems and expanding public access to the bay lands and bay.

This effort came to fruition when the former salt ponds were placed in U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service ownership in 2003. Following this, in 2005, Congress authorized the South San Francisco Bay Shoreline Study, directing the partners to identify and recommend flood risk management and ecosystem restoration projects along the Bay for federal funding. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other land-owning agencies within the project area are involved in the planning process.

This multi-pronged effort is one of the first of its kind in the Bay Area to develop a plan to provide 100-year tidal flood protection\* and anticipate sea level rise in the San Francisco Bay. It is being coordinated with another project in the area, the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project, which is the largest wetland restoration project on the west coast and seeks to restore historic wetlands on 15,100-acres of former salt ponds in the South Bay. The Shoreline Study must ensure 100-year tidal flood protection is in place before the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration effort can be fully completed.

*\*A 100-year tidal flood has a 1-percent chance of occurring in any given year.*



## Studying in phases

The Shoreline Study is being conducted in phases which were determined after flood risk damages were assessed for all of Santa Clara County bay lands from the City of Palo Alto to southern Alameda County. The area identified for the first study phase is the north San Jose shoreline area located between the Alviso Slough/Guadalupe River and Coyote Creek, which includes the Alviso community and the San José/Santa Clara Regional Wastewater Facility. The study refers to this area as Economic impact Area 11.

In December 2014, a draft Feasibility and Environmental Document for Economic Impact Area 11 was released to the public for review and comment. The document recommends a flood risk management, habitat restoration and recreation project for the first study area.

In December 2015, the Feasibility and Environmental Document was finalized and the Army Corps Chief of Engineers signed a report recommending Congress authorize the first phase of the project for construction.

# Working Together

## The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

A federal agency under the Department of Defense and one of the world's largest public engineering, design and construction management agencies.

## The Santa Clara Valley Water District

A state of California Special District, it is the primary water resources agency for Santa Clara County, serving as its water wholesaler, flood protection provider and steward for streams and creeks, aquifers and reservoirs.

## The State Coastal Conservancy

Created by the Legislature, it partners with local governments, public agencies, nonprofit organizations and private landowners to preserve and protect the coastal wetlands.

## The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

A bureau within the Department of the Interior that assists in guiding the conservation, development and management of the country's fish and wildlife service.



For more information, visit  
**[southbayshoreline.org](http://southbayshoreline.org)**

Para obtener información en español,  
por favor comuníquese con José Villarreal al  
(408) 630-2879.



## The South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project

This project aims to develop a plan to restore 40,000 acres of lost tidal wetlands within the 15,100 acres of Former Cargill industrial salt ponds in South San Francisco Bay. The State Coastal Conservancy and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service jointly manage the project with participation by the Santa Clara Valley Water District in the South Bay Alviso pond complex.

The Shoreline Study provides an opportunity to secure federal funding to assist in implementing parts of the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project. If the Shoreline Study successfully results in a project authorized by Congress for construction, federal funds would be leveraged with state and local funds to implement some or all of the actions also sought by the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project. The two projects are being coordinated and complement each other.

## CONTACT US

For more information about this project, contact:

- **Caleb Conn**, project manager, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, (415) 503-6849, [caleb.b.conn@usace.army.mil](mailto:caleb.b.conn@usace.army.mil);
- **Rechelle Blank**, project manager, Santa Clara Valley Water District, (408) 630-2632, [rblank@valleywater.org](mailto:rblank@valleywater.org);
- **Brenda Buxton**, State Coastal Conservancy, (510) 286-0753, [bbuxton@scc.ca.gov](mailto:bbuxton@scc.ca.gov)

